

Scientific name: Isoptera  
Higher classification: Blattodea

Introduction

Termites are social insects, working and living together in groups (colonies). The different castes within a colony differ in body shape and behaviour.



IN THE COLONY

There are five castes within a termite colony.

QUEEN AND KING

All termites are born with the ability to become kings or queens. The king and queen produce pheromones that regulate workers, changing them into soldiers or swarmers based on the needs of the group.

WORKERS

Workers build the nest and galleries, tend the eggs and young, gather food and feed other castes incapable of feeding themselves.

SOLDIERS

The soldier caste has a heavily armoured and pigmented head - they too are wingless, sterile and blind.

DID YOU KNOW?

After swarming at certain times of the year, alates (winged reproductive) shed their wings and each mated pair seeks out a suitable place to establish a new colony.

That is quite a system, designed to spread and flourish. Some subteranean queens are capable of producing 2000 eggs per day.